

Appendix F: Cumulative Projects

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Yosemite Valley Plan

Description: The National Park Service Pacific West Regional Director signed the Record of Decision for the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan* and its *Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* on December 29, 2000. The purpose of the *Yosemite Valley Plan* is to present an implementation plan for Yosemite Valley—from Happy Isles at the east Valley to the intersection of the El Portal and Big Oak Flat Roads at the west end. It also presents actions in adjacent areas of the park and the El Portal Administrative Site that directly relate to actions proposed in Yosemite Valley. The specific purpose of the *Yosemite Valley Plan* within Yosemite Valley is to:

- Restore, protect, and enhance the resources of Yosemite Valley
- Provide opportunities for high-quality, resource-based visitor experiences
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Provide effective park operations, including employee housing, to meet the mission of the National Park Service

Yosemite Valley Plan actions will reduce fragmentation between the highly valued natural resource areas from Clark’s Bridge downstream to Swinging Bridge. Areas in the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley that have been degraded or fragmented (such as the Merced River and its tributaries, wetlands, meadows, and California black oak woodlands) will be restored to one large and dynamic river-governed ecosystem. There will be minimal new development west of the Yosemite Lodge area.

The *Yosemite Valley Plan* includes implementation of a traveler information and traffic management system. Parking for 550 day visitors’ vehicles will be consolidated in the Yosemite Village area and (in peak season) in three out-of-Valley areas (El Portal, Badger Pass, and Hazel Green or Foresta). Shuttle buses will transport visitors to locations throughout Yosemite Valley and also between the Valley and out-of-Valley parking areas. A new visitor center and transit center will be located in Yosemite Village adjacent to day-visitor parking. These actions will result in a major reduction of vehicular congestion in the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley during the summer.

The number of campsites will increase, and the number of lodging units will decrease. The area of the former Upper River and Lower River Campgrounds will be restored to a mosaic of meadow, riparian, and California black oak woodland communities. The River Protection Overlay prescribed in the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan* will be implemented in Yosemite Valley and the El Portal Administrative Site. Southside Drive will be converted to two-way traffic from El Capitan crossover to Curry Village, and Northside Drive will be closed to motor vehicles from El Capitan crossover to Yosemite Lodge and converted to a multi-use (bicycle and pedestrian) paved trail.

Many of the actions that will occur under the *Yosemite Valley Plan* in relation to existing conditions (see Volume IA, page 2-47, of the *Yosemite Valley Plan* for a complete discussion of actions) are discussed below.

Facilities and services that will be removed under the *Yosemite Valley Plan* include: roads through Stoneman Meadow and the southern portion of Ahwahnee Meadow (including the road through the former Upper River and Lower River Campgrounds); North Pines Campground; historic Sugar Pine Bridge (to restore the hydrologic system of the Merced River); other historic structures including the concessioner stable, Concession Headquarters, Village Garage, Cascades Diversion Dam, and five Cascades houses; the abandoned wastewater treatment plant in El Portal from a sensitive cultural resource area; most parking (including at Lower Yosemite Fall) in east Valley, other than at lodging, campgrounds, and the Yosemite Village area; five motel buildings from Yosemite Lodge; and commercial trail rides in Yosemite Valley.

Facilities to be constructed under the *Yosemite Valley Plan* include: a day-visitor parking area for 550 vehicles at Yosemite Village; a visitor center and transit center near the day-visitor parking area at Yosemite Village; a new shuttle stop, restroom, enlarged viewing area near the base of Yosemite Falls, interpretive exhibits, and an informal gathering/viewing area in the Lower Yosemite Fall area; a vehicle bridge across Yosemite Creek near Yosemite Lodge; a possible replacement footbridge at Happy Isles near the Nature Center; lodging at Curry Village; campsites east of Curry Village, in the Upper Pines and Lower Pines areas, and along Tenaya Creek; employee housing at Curry Village, Yosemite Village, El Portal, Wawona, and Foresta; and two fire stations, one in the Yosemite Village area (outside of the Yosemite Village Historic District), and one in the Curry Village area.

The *Yosemite Valley Plan* will establish and implement: a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection study and program to monitor existing and desired conditions for natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experience; a traveler information and traffic management system to provide information to visitors, provide incentives for efficient use of available parking and transportation services, and manage access and parking; seasonal out-of-Valley day-visitor parking areas at Badger Pass, El Portal, and Hazel Green or Foresta; some utility hookups for recreational vehicles and shower facilities in campgrounds; and design guidelines for new construction and for rehabilitating the landscape in historic developed areas.

The *Yosemite Valley Plan* will convert: the Yosemite Museum/Valley District Building back to its historic function as a museum; Southside Drive from El Capitan crossover to Curry Village to two-way traffic (road widened where necessary); Northside Drive from El Capitan crossover to Yosemite Lodge from a vehicle road to a multi-use (bicycle and pedestrian) paved trail; and the trail to the base of Yosemite Falls to a route accessible by people with mobility impairments. The *Yosemite Valley Plan* will increase or expand: shuttle bus service west to Bridalveil Fall and out-of-Valley parking areas; interpretive and orientation services, including a new visitor center in Yosemite Valley and visitor contact stations at or near principal park entrances; and multi-use paved trails.

The *Yosemite Valley Plan* will reduce: stock trails by approximately 0.5 mile (private stock use will continue on all other designated trails); lodging to approximately 961 units (including approximately 100 units at Housekeeping Camp); and traffic entering the east Valley on a typically busy day by 50%.

The Yosemite Valley Plan will relocate: employee housing to El Portal, Foresta, and Wawona (subject to further site planning, environmental review and public participation), leaving 723 employee beds in Yosemite Valley; National Park Service and concessioner administrative stables operations to McCauley Ranch in Foresta; National Park Service and concessioner headquarters out of Yosemite Valley; the historic Superintendent's house (Residence 1) and its garage to a site within the Yosemite Village Historic District; and museum collections storage, research library, and archives consolidated in Yosemite Valley.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan**

Description: In 1999 and 2000, the National Park Service developed a comprehensive management plan for sections of the Merced Wild and Scenic River that it administers. The purpose of the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*, which was released in 2001, is to protect and enhance the river's Outstandingly Remarkable Values for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The final plan and environmental impact statement was released to the public in July 2000; the planning process was completed in August 2000, with the signing of the Record of Decision. Included in the plan are descriptions of the boundaries, the official classification of river segments, and a description of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values associated with the Merced River. The *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan's* land-use zoning prescriptions have served as a guide to protect river values during the *Yosemite Valley Plan* process, and have thereby directed the type of potential development and potential levels of use allowed within the river corridor in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and El Portal.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Fire Management Plan Update**

Description: The National Park Service is updating the 1990 *Yosemite National Park Fire Management Plan*. The objectives associated with updating the plan are to improve ecosystem health, enhance public safety, and provide guidance to park operations for successfully integrating fire with other vegetation management principles. The plan addresses prescribed fire, wildland fire, and community fire protection services. It also addresses parkwide fire issues and considers effects to burn units, vegetation associations, air resources, watersheds, soils, cultural landscapes, and other natural, cultural, and social resource variables.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan

Description: The existing utility infrastructure serving Yosemite Valley was identified in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* as a potential problem due to its age, condition, inadequate capacity, inaccessibility to future facilities, and inappropriate location in environmentally sensitive areas. The utility systems in question are potable water, sanitary sewage, power, and, to a more limited extent, communications. As a first step in the correction of the deficiencies in these utility systems, an assessment of each system's suitability for use with the new facilities proposed in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* is being made. An assessment of the existing sanitary sewer system includes the following tasks:

- Condition assessment of the sewer system, including cleaning and closed circuit television inspection
- Field surveying and mapping of the existing sanitary sewer system
- Assessment of the capacity of the existing sewer system, including flow monitoring and hydraulic modeling of existing flow scenarios
- Development of a sewer system Capital Improvement Plan that identified needed system improvement and prioritizes them into three categories: immediate, intermediate, and long-term
- Integration of the survey and modeling data generated with Yosemite National Park geographic information system to create a Capital Improvement Plan geographic information system

Similar condition, capacity, and reliability assessments of the other utility systems will be performed in accordance with the scope of services. Because of the inter-related nature of the utility systems serving Yosemite Valley and the need to expedite the correction of all utility systems serving the key areas of the Valley, the National Park Service is preparing the integrated East Yosemite Valley Utilities Improvement Plan that summarizes the results of the individual utility assessments and includes recommendations for rehabilitation, relocation, and upgrade, cost estimates, and phasing of the recommended utility projects.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Lower Yosemite Fall Project

Description: This project consists of improving and rehabilitating the physical infrastructure at the 56-acre Lower Yosemite Fall area. The project work includes rebuilding/rehabilitating trails; removing several trail segments; rebuilding/rehabilitating five pedestrian bridges; constructing one new pedestrian bridge; removing one pedestrian bridge; removing the existing parking area and revegetating it to natural conditions; constructing a new shuttle bus stop; replacing/relocating the restroom; creating new access points; fabricating and installing new directional signs; creating a gathering circle for groups; restoring portions of forest and creekside habitat to natural conditions; installing amenities such as bike racks, picnic tables, public telephones, drinking fountain, and trash cans; enlarging the viewing areas new the base of the fall; and providing educational exhibits.

This improvement project will enhance a world-class visitor experience, create a loop trail system that is fully accessible to people with mobility impairments, reduce the perception of crowding and congestion at main views and along the trail, and improve the hydrology of the braided stream system by replace the narrow bridges that replace the natural stream flow.

To address removal of the tour bus loading/unloading and parking area from the Lower Yosemite Fall area, replacement loading/unloading and parking spaces will be provided for tour buses. Long-term tour bus loading and unloading would occur at the future new transit center in Yosemite Village.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Yosemite Valley Shuttle Bus Stop Improvements

Description: This project consists of the preparation of preliminary design plans, environmental compliance documents, and construction drawings; and the construction of six 10 by 80 foot concrete braking pads, and the rehabilitation or replacement of 94,000 square feet of asphalt road approaches.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Rehabilitate Ansel Adams Gallery Buildings

Description: The Ansel Adams Gallery facility includes four buildings: the gallery with its attached residence, a darkroom building, and two duplex residential structures. The work of this project will provide the planning, design, and construction for the stabilization, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of the gallery facilities. Initially, the planning and design will be prepared for the three historic structures, followed by the darkroom building. Construction will follow in subsequent phases of work. The issues to be resolve include structural instability, weathered and damaged siding and roof materials, window and door repair and replacement, utility system repair and replacement, site drainage, and accessibility for the disabled. The two duplex residential buildings will be evaluated from the perspective of their historic integrity, as compared to the alternative of replacement, using various methods of establishing value.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Improvements to Curry Village and East Yosemite Valley Campgrounds

Description: A site plan is being developed for the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley to implement actions called for in the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. The project area generally extends south of the Merced River from the eastern boundary of Housekeeping Camp to Happy Isles, as well as the area along Tenaya Creek for proposed campsites. The site plan will ensure that all related actions proposed for the east Valley are implemented in a logical, feasible, and cost-effective manner. Most of the actions will not begin for several years, but in the meantime, the site plan will

result in a more detailed picture of how and in what order the projects in the east Valley should be implemented. Following are examples of the many actions identified in the *Yosemite Valley Plan* for east Yosemite Valley:

- Reconfiguring campgrounds at Upper and Lower Pines
- Adding campsites at the new South Camp and Tenaya Creek Campgrounds
- Removing Curry Orchard and restoring the area to natural conditions
- Constructing new visitor cabins-with-bath in Curry Village
- Relocating the Curry Village ice rink
- Providing new and reconfigured food service and concession facilities at Curry Village
- Relocating the concessioner stable
- Converting Southside Drive to two-way traffic
- Constructing a fire station in the Curry Village area

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Curry Village Employee Housing

Description: This project includes the design and construction of new employee housing and related facilities to accommodate approximately 217 concession employees in the area west of Curry Village in Yosemite Valley. This housing will replace concessioner housing lost in the 1997 flood. The employee housing units will be designed in accordance with the character of the area, with particular focus on the Curry Village Historic District. The scope of this housing project includes providing parking and access, an employee wellness center, concessioner housing, management offices, maintenance facilities, postal facilities, and housing-related storage.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Ecological Restoration of Flood-Damaged Campgrounds and Visitor Experience Improvements

Description: The ecological restoration seeks to restore natural processes to an ecosystem so that the area can recover from past human development and activities. A plan is being developed for the ecological restoration of the Upper River, Lower River, North Pines, and the northwest end of Lower Pines campgrounds; Group Camp, Backpackers Camp; Housekeeping Camp within the River Protection Overlay of the Merced River; and The Ahwahnee tennis court in Yosemite Valley. As part of this project, surveys are being conducted for archeological sites; the history of human disturbance in the area is being investigated; the former distribution of meadow, wetland, and forest communities is being investigated; a restoration prescription is being developed that recognizes the retention, modification, or removal of bridges, bicycle paths, riprap, and roads; the necessity and extent of revegetation is being determined; a revegetation strategy is being developed; and monitoring of river channel morphology, vegetation transects, tree density, and photo points are being installed.

Ecological restoration may include:

- Removal of imported fill material
- Removal of abandoned roads and infrastructure
- Re-establishment of natural contours on the land
- Restoration of natural surface and ground water movement
- Replanting of native vegetation
- Removal of non-native plant and animal species
- Restoration of carbon and nitrogen cycles in degraded soils

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Rehabilitate Yosemite Valley Campground Restrooms

Description: This project will rehabilitate a total of 19 six-stall restrooms in Upper Pines, Lower Pines, and North Pines Campgrounds, as well as the 15- to 20-foot-walkway approach to each restroom. Work will include replacement of staff partitions by installing graffiti-resistant surfaces, painting of exterior trim and interior walls and floors, replacement of mirrors and toilet paper dispensers, repair of outside privacy screens, improvements to meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements (replacement of entry doors, installation of grab bars and tilted mirrors as necessary), replacement of wall vents, replacement of signs, replacement of electric service panels, improvement of lighting, and replacement of fill material for walkway approaches.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Merced River Ecological Restoration at Eagle Creek

Description: Eagle Creek flows into Yosemite Valley immediately west of the Three Brothers rock formations and joins the Merced River about one-half mile downstream from Yosemite Lodge. The creek banks of the reach of Eagle Creek between Northside Drive and the Merced River are badly eroded and only sparsely vegetated, partly due to trampling by pedestrians. The eroded riverbank will be re-contoured then revegetated; the trampled river terrace will be decompacted; and fences will be constructed to direct visitors to sandbars for river access. The ecological restoration effort will involve the following:

- Plug remaining portions of abandoned sewage lines with concrete and remove the manhole and the concrete structure that crosses the creek bed
- Restore the eroded creek channel using methods previously tested on the banks of the Merced River. Restoration techniques require building up the bank with willow cuttings, woody debris, rock, and mulch
- Revegetate the bank of Eagle Creek with native shrubs, cuttings, and seeds
- Redirect visitors to access the river in a more appropriate location that will not cause bank erosion

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Cook's Meadow Ecological Restoration

Description: This project restored a dynamic and diverse wetland ecosystem. The Cook's Meadow restoration project involved the following actions:

- Filling four drainage ditches created by early Euro-American settlers
 - Removing a raised, abandoned roadbed and a trail that bisected the meadow
 - Reconstructing the trail on an elevated boardwalk that now allows water to flow freely and reduces foot traffic on sensitive meadow plants
 - Installing culverts under Sentinel Road to direct runoff into the meadow and restore the natural flow of water from the Merced River during seasonal periods of high water
 - Reducing non-native plant species encroaching on native species by using manual, mechanical, and chemical control methods
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Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Happy Isles Gauging Station Bridge Removal

Description: The Happy Isles Gauging Station Bridge spanned the Merced River in Yosemite Valley's east end. The bridge was badly damaged during the 1997 flood and was deemed unsafe by representatives of the Federal Highway Administration. The bridge began to show signs of immediate failure in 2000 when a large sinkhole appeared on the west abutment. Due to the threat to public health and safety, the bridge was removed in the fall of 2001, improving free-flow of the Merced River. The east abutment was retained to protect the operation stream flow gauge. Some landscaping work remains to be completed in 2002.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Happy Isles to Vernal Fall Trail Reconstruction

Description: This project proposes to reconstruct 5,400 linear feet of the Vernal Fall Trail from Happy Isles to the base of the Mist Trail stairs. Actions include construction of an average tread width of seven feet; rebuilding of trail walls; redistribution of old pavement as sub-base; and application of layers of aggregate road base, tack oil, and asphalt, with a granite dust topcoat. On steeper sections of the trail, improved traction will be provided for pedestrians. A functioning drainage system will be established in the trail corridor by paving water breaks and constructing rock drainages to channel water away from the trail.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Cascades Diversion Dam Removal Project

Description: The Cascades Diversion Dam is located on the main stem of the Merced River at the far west end of Yosemite Valley. The dam is a timber “crib” structure with associated concrete abutments. Removing the dam is part of the overall intent of the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan* and *Yosemite Valley Plan* to restore free-flowing conditions to the Merced Wild and Scenic River. In its present deteriorated condition, the dam also presents a significant public health and safety hazard due to the potential for uncontrolled collapse. Cascades Diversion Dam is located adjacent to El Portal Road and the dam removal project will affect access along El Portal Road during project implementation.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: El Portal Road Improvements Project

Description: As part of the road improvements, El Portal Road between Pohono Bridge and the intersection of the Big Oak Flat Road with the El Portal Road (at the west end of Yosemite Valley) would be improved. This segment of road has two narrow travel lanes, each 9.5 feet wide. Subsequent to the January 1997 flood, this road failed east of the Big Oak Flat/El Portal Road intersection and was repaired temporarily. The El Portal Road Project would widen the road to 11-foot lanes and stabilize the road shoulder adjacent to the Merced River. Road improvements would be designed to improve safety and minimize the chance of roadway failures in the future.

Agency Name: Joint Powers Authority Commission

Project Name: Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

Description: YARTS is a collaborative, inter-agency effort begun in 1992 to evaluate the feasibility of a regional transportation system and to identify the best options for initial implementation and upkeep of such a system. YARTS is a Joint Powers Authority under California law and the National Park Service is an ex-officio partner of the Joint Powers Authority Commission, participating in all discussions but not as a voting member. YARTS will provide a positive alternative choice for access to Yosemite National Park for visitors, employees, and residents. YARTS service is not intended to replace auto-access or trans-Sierra travel, but is intended to provide a viable alternative that offers a positive experience, maximizing comfort and convenience for riders while guaranteeing access into the park.

YARTS has four primary objectives:

- Increase transportation options
- Reduce reliance on automobiles
- Support local economies
- Improve regional air quality

The target market for YARTS service includes those visitors staying overnight in the gateway communities and Yosemite National Park employees who live in the gateway communities. Decisions on the placement of bus stops and transfer facilities are local land-use decisions that will be made by the County Board of Supervisors in gateway communities, and by the National Park Service for locations inside the park boundaries. YARTS staging areas outside the park are undergoing a region-wide environmental compliance process and will likely be a part of a region-wide shuttle bus system.